



**Erie County Youth Bureau**  
**810 East Ferry Street**  
**Buffalo, NY 14211**

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### Erie County Youth Board:

- Liza Acanfora
- Zachary Barry
- Kendall Bazinet
- Kelli Blakeley
- David Caywood
- Jeffrey Davis
- Paul Denning
- Veronica Golden
- Peter Johnson
- Susan Lumadue
- Juliana Norton
- Mitchell Nowakowski
- Kathleen O'Brien
- Brian Rochford
- Sheila Schostick
- Ryan Taughrin

# Erie County Youth Bureau Chronicle

September 2016

## Letter From the Deputy Commissioner

I have had the opportunity to visit some of the Primetime program sites this summer as well as hear about so many of the programs from Ben and John. The programs this summer offered hope, encouragement and positive skills to our youth of Erie County. It is both an honor and a privilege to work with such hard-working and dedicated people.

The youth of Erie County are fortunate to have such powerful programs which give them opportunities to improve their lives. I thank all of you for your great work throughout the summer and for the powerful, positive impact that your agencies are having on the youth of Erie County each and every day.

I look forward to visiting many of your programs in the upcoming months as we continue to collaborate to do great work together.

With appreciation and respect,

**Paul Kubala, Erie County Deputy Commissioner of Youth Services,**



## Letter From the Director

One of the many reasons that living in Western New York is so extraordinary and unsurpassed is our experience of the four seasons. As summer wanes and fall commences I am reminded of our shared good fortune. We have the uncommon privilege of associating our memories, those recently formed and those from years past with our experience of the seasons that helped shape them. This past summer the heat and humidity encouraged many to seek shelter in splash pads, public pools, local beaches and in front lawns irrigated by Lake Erie water flowing from hoses and sprinklers. On those recent days our senses relished the enticing smell of burgers and hot dogs at cook outs as gentle breezes offered temporary relief. The sounds of summer camp surrounded us as kids shouted, tossed and rolled, leapt and ran as we took in the brilliant image of a bright blue sky and a single lonely cloud to enjoy during later drearier months. As we turn the page of the calendar revealing September those memories give way to the anticipation of leaves crunching below our feet and the crispness which will soon fill the air. These are the days when yellow buses resume their routes and each morning the march towards fall and winter becomes clearer. The first days and weeks of school can be a magical time for kids and adults of all ages. We are full of eagerness, excitement, anxiety and anticipation. We will have challenges and great success. We will remember some of these days for the rest of our lives and be reminded of them each year as the world outside our windows inspires our recollection.

**Ben Hilligas, Erie County Youth Bureau Director**

## 2nd Annual Summer Primetime Picnic at Chestnut Ridge Park a Huge Success

On August 4th, 2016, the Erie County Youth Bureau and Youth Board hosted the second annual Summer Primetime Picnic. This year, the event took place at Chestnut Ridge Park in Orchard Park, NY. The picnic was a huge success.

Approximately 250 youth, partner agency staff, Youth Bureau staff, and Youth Board members were present at the event. Almost 200 youth from 14 funded Summer Primetime agencies made the journey to Chestnut Ridge Park, supervised by over 50 staff members from said agencies.

There was a wide variety of engaging and educational programs available at the picnic. The Erie County mounted patrol demonstrated the ability of their horses and explained their role in keeping our community safe. Two D.A.R.E. officer from the Orchard Park Police Department handed out school supplies and educated youth and adults about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse and the power to stay above the influence of such substances.

Computers for Children demonstrated science experiments, while the Police Athletic League held bike safety demonstrations. PAL even handed out a bike helmet to each participant.

The Buffalo Erie County Public Library literally brought the world of literature to the youth with its "Library on Wheels" bookmobile. Two staff members also gave youth the options to participate in



arts and crafts projects as well as recreational opportunities.

No picnic would be complete without a wide variety of lawn games and organized sports activities, namely soccer and a "tug of war", and this picnic was no exception. And who could forget about food and beverages? Youth Bureau Director Ben Hilligas manned the grill, enduring 90+ degree temperatures and direct sunlight for several hours to keep everyone fed. Finally, a basket raffle was held and the youth were the big winners of some great prizes.

On behalf of the Youth Bureau, a huge thank you goes out to the Youth Board as well as all of the youth-serving agencies who donated their time, energy, and resources into making the Summer Primetime Picnic such a huge success.

And of course another thank you to all of the youth and staff who came out to enjoy the picnic itself, and all of those who operated Summer Primetime programs!

## Youth, Providers, and Community Leaders Celebrate Summer Learning at Canalside

On Wednesday, July 13th, Buffalo, NY's Canalside was the setting of a celebration of summer learning and fun.

Thousands of youth and more than a dozen youth-serving agencies, as well as Mayor Byron Brown, Say Yes Buffalo Director David Rust, our own Youth Bureau Director Ben Hilligas, and many others from across the area gathered together on this day to celebrate National Summer Learning Day.

NSLD is a fairly new concept. One day in July of each year, a day is set aside to recognize and celebrate summer learning across the country. Numerous studies have shown the importance of read-

ing and solving science problems and math equations even after the final school bell has rung in late June. Many students, especially those who are disadvantaged in some way, forget much of what they learned during the academic year unless their minds are engaged and they continue to learn during their summer vacation.

The event was a huge success and a big thanks goes out to the many sponsors that made the day possible. It is hoped that this success can be replicated year after year. It is critical that increased awareness be brought to the dangers of summer learning loss and the benefits of

positive youth development programming, particularly during the summer months when traditional school has ended.





## Spotlight: Erie County Youth Board Members Help Make More Happen!

The Erie County Youth Board works behind the scenes to help support dozens of positive youth development programs throughout Erie County every year.

The Erie County Youth Board is a citizen advisory panel. Board members are volunteers who advise the Youth Bureau on matters of positive youth development, delinquency prevention, and runaway and homeless youth programs, among others. The Youth Bureau and Youth Board work closely together to ensure that the best possible youth programs in Erie County are supported in their missions. Board members review and recommend applications for state and county funding for services to youth. Together, they work to make funding recommendations to the Erie County Executive and Legislature.



Youth Board members Sheila Schostick, Peter Johnson, Jeffrey Davis, and Kelli Blakely at the 2nd Annual Prime-time Picnic at Chestnut Ridge Park on August 4th, 2016.

In order to ensure that the youth of Erie County are receiving the best programs available, board members attend meetings on the second Monday of each month. Board members are also encouraged to attend agency site visits in order to better understand the programs that they review and help to support.

Of a possible total of 21 volunteers from the community, the Board may also be made up of at least two youth volunteers from area high schools and/or colleges. Furthermore, liaisons to the Board are volunteers who attend Board meetings but who have no voting privileges. These

members are selected for their experience and knowledge in youth matters and are a valuable resource to the Board.

We are always recruiting additional members of the Youth Board. For more information, or if you know anyone who might be a good fit, please contact Ben Hilligas, Youth Bureau Director, at (716) 923-4051 or [benjamin.hilligas@erie.gov](mailto:benjamin.hilligas@erie.gov). Youth Board members may not currently work for an agency which Erie County funds, nor may members sit on a board of directors of any such agency.

Thank you to all of our former and current Youth Board members for your passionate service to Erie County's youth population. You help to support our



agencies, their staff, and the young people whom they work to empower every day.

## Save the Date: Youth Leadership Forum to Take Place on November 17th, 2016

The Western New York Youth Bureau Association, of which the Erie County Youth Bureau is a member, will host its annual Youth Leadership Forum on November 17th, 2016 at the Millennium Hotel Buffalo in Cheektowaga from 9:00am-2:30pm.

The Youth Leadership Forum, or YLF, is an event held each year that is designed to give youth and youth-serving organizations a voice for advocacy and change in our community. It also allows for an opportunity for young people to get directly involved in the political decision-making process that so often plays out without the input of those who are most

directly impacted by such decisions.

This year's YLF will feature workshops, local legislators in attendance, lunch, and much more. The keynote speaker is Karl Shallowhorn. Mr. Shallowhorn serves as Director of Community Advocacy, splitting his time between Compeer of Greater Buffalo and the Mental Health Association of Erie County. Karl works tirelessly to advocate on behalf of those with mental health issues, including young people.

Staff from any youth-serving agency may attend this event. In order to bring youth, however, eligible agencies must be members of the WNY Youth Bureau

Association. Anyone interested in attending the event and/or in becoming a member of the association may contact Jillian Gorman-King with the Town of Cheektowaga Youth Bureau at 716-897-7207 ext. 2162. We hope to see you there!



## Erie County Youth Services Administration

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**ECYB Mission:** *“To serve youth and families through support of positive youth development programs and juvenile delinquency prevention and intervention programs that strengthen families and communities.”*



[www2.erie.gov/  
socialservices](http://www2.erie.gov/socialservices) or search  
“Erie County Youth Bureau”

## UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS:

- ◆ Saturday, September 10th: **Buffalo, NY Tunnel to Towers 5K run/walk**. Youth groups are strongly encouraged to take part. Please contact Volunteer Coordinator and Erie County Youth Board member Ryan Taughrin if interested. This 5K run/walk is a local chapter of the run started in NYC by the Stephen Siller Foundation. Their foundation aims to build smart homes for paraplegic and quadriplegic veterans, and honors police, fire, EMS, and other first responders throughout the country. More information here: <http://tunnel2towers.org/>.
- ◆ Sunday, October 9th, 8:00-11:00am: **West Side Community Services “Inaugural Come Home to the West Side 5K”** - 161 Vermont Street, Buffalo, NY 14213. [Click here](#) for details!
- ◆ *Save the Date!* Thursday, October 20th: **17th Annual Lights On! Afterschool**—Details TBA

We welcome submissions of community events at any time, so please consider sending us notices of upcoming events that you believe might be of interest to your colleagues. Thank you!